

Great Debates

The Revolution was over and the Constitution was ratified. But debates about the meaning of government by the people were just beginning.



I, Too, Am Free

"Moi Libre Aussi" by Louis-Simon Boizot and J. Louis Darcis, Paris, around 1790

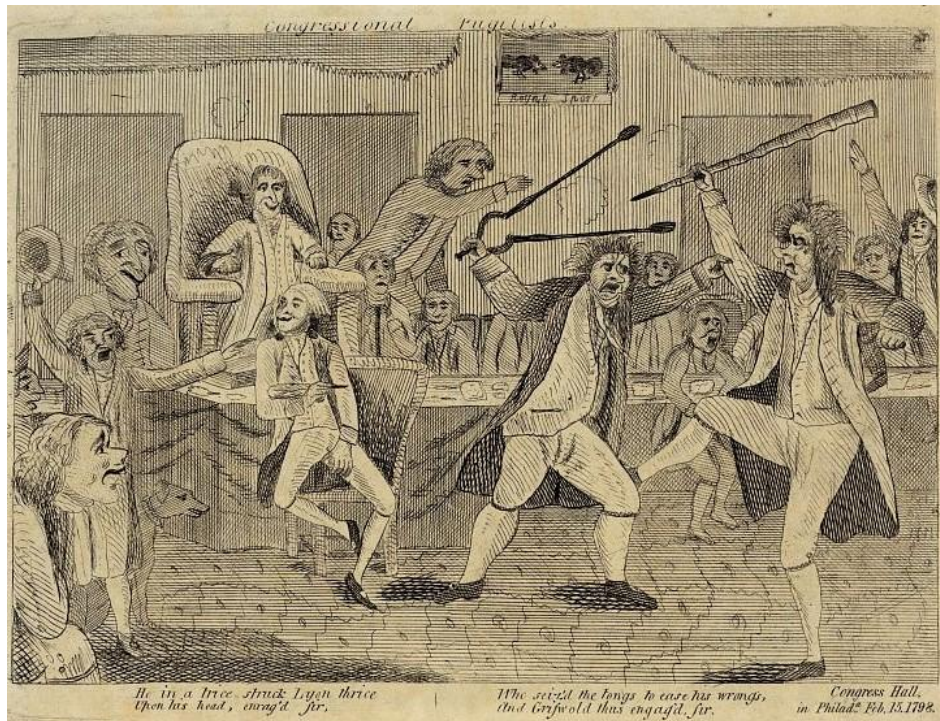
Courtesy of John Carter Brown Library at Brown University



Lady Liberty

"Liberty," from a fire hat, Citizen Fire Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1836

Would the new, representative form of government truly represent the interests and views of common men and women? How should those people participate to make their voices heard? What would limit the political influence of families of inherited wealth and social standing?



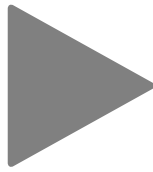
Congress in Chaos

"Congressional Pugilists," Philadelphia, 1798

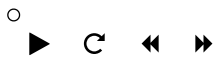
Courtesy of Library of Congress <<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661719/>>

Who Were the People?

Ratified in 1787, the U.S. Constitution established a new nation, to be governed by "We the People." But who were the people? How would they be represented in Congress? And who could vote? Americans have never stopped debating these questions. This short animation provides an overview of how early Americans tried to answer them.



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3:06



✓ Transcript

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Hours & Admission

Open every day, except December 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Admission is free and no tickets are required.

Location & Contact

1300 Constitution Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20560 <<https://www.google.com/maps/place/smithsonian+national+museum+of+american+history/@38.8912835,-77.0322449,17z>>

Contact Information </about/contact>

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